

## Enjoying the sun - while avoiding the burn

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Summer is here, and the days are warm and sunny again. But if you're not careful, an afternoon on the beach or in the park can lead to a case of sunburn. And worse: Overexposure to the sun's ultraviolet radiation (UVA and UVB) can damage your skin and increase your risk of skin cancer. Sunscreen will offer some protection (though some researchers argue that it doesn't prevent melanoma, the most dangerous type of skin cancer), but you've got to follow the directions. Here's some advice:

- **Sun block, by the numbers.** Pick the right protection in the first place. A Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 will block about 93% of harmful UVB rays; SPF 50 screens out 99%. Apply your sunscreen 30 minutes before going out. This gives your skin adequate time to absorb it.
- **Apply sufficient amounts.** Experts advise applying at least one full ounce of sunscreen before going out – roughly enough to fill a shot glass. Reapply your lotion every two hours, and after swimming or exercising enough to raise a sweat. During a long day outdoors, you should use from one-quarter to one-half of an eight-ounce bottle. Remember to apply sunscreen to often overlooked areas of your body like your ears, lips, and feet.
- **Minimize exposure.** Think of sunscreen as a second line of defense against sunburn and skin damage, not your primary protection. Wear a broad hat, sunglasses, and protective clothing, and try to avoid direct sunlight between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun is strongest and the atmosphere absorbs less UV radiation than it does during the rest of the day.

With just a little precaution and preparation we can all enjoy outdoor activities this spring and summer – without the pain of sunburn!